



TCI FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM 2026 GUIDANCE NOTE

Transforming Communities for Inclusion (TCI) is an independent, global Organisation of Persons with Disabilities [OPD] focusing on the monitoring and implementation of all human rights, for persons with psychosocial disabilities. We are guided by the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) to mobilize persons with psychosocial disabilities and their organizations at the national level to advocate for inclusion within disability & development.

Since 2012, Transforming Communities for Inclusion (TCI), has emerged as a critical platform to organize a CRPD based and self-advocacy led response to the growing psychosocial disability momentum in the regions especially in the Asia-Pacific, Africa and Latin America. The TCI network today gathers groups and individuals of 21 countries across the globe.

Based on our common experience of exclusion from mainstream society, our movement of persons with psychosocial disabilities is inclusive of - people who identify as persons with intersectional and neurodiverse identities, autistic persons, users and survivors of psychiatry, 'mad' persons, persons deemed to be of 'unsound mind', etc. The movement is not about having a 'diagnosis' but about having an identity as a person with a disability.

Over the years, TCI has progressively developed a strong consensus on the centrality of Article 19 of the CRPD which contributes to its name - Transforming Communities for Inclusion. It has created partnerships and various opportunities for training and advocacy related engagements with the disability movements at the sub-regional, regional and global levels, while facilitating leaders and various public engagements at the national levels.

TCI has created successful instruments to build capacity, empower and strengthen national groups, through its members and member OPDs, by providing programmatic opportunities such as OPD support grants, micro-grants, organizing Country Missions, Sub-Regional Convenings, Multi-stakeholder meetings, and TCI Plenary conferences. TCI Fellowship program is also one of the key instruments created within TCI, initially with the support of International Disability Alliance.

TCI Fellowships are provided to support members to build their work at the national level and strengthen influence within movements and the policy environment. In many

countries, there are no organizations for persons with psychosocial disabilities, while in some, TCI members are slowly organizing as groups and young organizations. Over the years and through our program instruments, TCI has also enabled formation of strong OPDs in Asia-Pacific, Africa and Latin American regions. OPDs are still confronted in most countries with threats - legal system failures, lack of political will, public opinion bias and prejudices, conventional service provision with its colonial and medical bias, no funding and industry vested interests to name a few. Moreover, the national coalition and cross disability movements do not have adequate representation from the constituency of persons with psychosocial disabilities.

TCI fellowships have been a great medium to build the capacity of national leaders and their OPDs to carry out stronger advocacy and social innovation in line with the CRPD, and to reframe their overall advocacy at the national level as an "inclusion" movement and work with disability inclusion stakeholders for Disability Inclusive Development.

TCI has led the global reframing of advocacy from "mental health" to "inclusion", to bring policy attention to inclusion and community transformation; rather than just focussing towards the betterment of existing mental health services. In order to back this advocacy, TCI has consolidated several learning's on Inclusion, through reports and advocacy documents.

Especially in the Asia Pacific and Africa today, TCI holds a prominent space as one of empowering individuals and movements of persons with psychosocial disabilities, and the advocacy for inclusion, with cross disability supporters and various multi stakeholders of the region. However, this emerging movement is still fragile and does not yet have a steady response both to national issues as well as to regional and global opportunities and threats.

The fellowship program is a unique instrument that TCI is offering to its **full, and associate members only** for mobilizing and building a national momentum, developing advocacy content based on lived experiences, engage in national, regional, and global advocacy initiatives and contribute to TCI work by research, and documentation.

TCI FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM 2026

TCI in partnership and with support of Disability Rights Fund is offering two fellowships to support its members national advocacy on deinstitutionalization from the perspective of youth and gender.

The timeframe for the fellowship will be of 12 months, from March 2026 till February 2027.

Our fellowships are guided by two specific objectives:

1. Capacity strengthening of **national** groups/organizations of persons with psychosocial disabilities to carry out advocacy and social innovation in line with the CRPD.
2. Continued regional and global engagement to ensure Global South perspective for greater inclusion of persons with psychosocial disabilities within the broader disability rights and inclusive development processes and to reframe global and regional mental health momentum with the CRPD.

WHO CAN APPLY?

TCI is offering two streams this year:

1. Outreach and Advocacy Fellow: Emerging national leaders from TCI members who are persons with psychosocial disabilities, and are interested to strengthen their advocacy on deinstitutionalization and community inclusion with a specific focus on youth and gender diverse communities. This can also include those desiring to start an independent peer led support service in line with UNCRPD and Guidelines on Deinstitutionalization, including in emergencies to support community living of persons with psychosocial disabilities.
2. Research Fellow: National leaders from TCI member networks who have been significantly contributing to national, and regional advocacy and are interested in conducting/ a research study in collaboration with other TCI members, partners and networks on financing for deinstitutionalization demonstrating their cost effectiveness as compared to institutional living systems. The study will also leverage available best practices led by OPDs of persons with psychosocial disabilities.

The core objective of this program is to build capacity of cadres worldwide with national level program engagements and continued regional and global engagements. This will strengthen the TCI movement globally. It will build strong capacity of national groups of persons with psychosocial disabilities to carry out advocacy and social innovation in line with the CRPD during and after the fellowships.

THE FELLOWSHIP IS COMPOSED OF 2 ELEMENTS:

- A fellowship grants up to 600 USD/month
- Ongoing support, mentoring and technical assistance from the TCI secretariat and senior members/leaders, as and when needed.

THE CONDITIONS FOR THE FELLOWSHIP ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- ✓ The fellowship program is open only to **TCI full/associate members and its members networks.**

- ✓ Applicants applying can be asked to submit additional documents if requested by the selection committee. Failure to provide this information will result in the application not being considered. Applicants should provide at least 2 references (one from TCI member organization & one from any other stakeholder which can include an employer, partner organization, donor agency or academic institution).
- ✓ The fellowship supports areas of work that contribute to one or more of TCI's strategic plans and outcomes as mentioned above
- ✓ The fellowship contributes to the stipend covering the cost of the time given by the leaders to consolidate their advocacy work and share learning's both at a national and regional levels. It cannot be used to cover administrative staff or other activity cost.
- ✓ The fellowship will be paid on a monthly basis against agreed upon milestones and workplan deliverables.
- ✓ The grant is up to 600 USD/month which should cover stipend for up to 12 months. Each fellow will have to submit a monthly report on the basis of which payments will be disbursed and a final grant competition report at the end of the fellowship period.
- ✓ During the completion of the fellowship period (last 2 months), fellows will be requested to develop future plans and submit to the secretariat with a final completion report. The stipend of last two months will be disbursed only after submitting the final completion report.
- ✓ All reporting templates, invoice templates and workplan templates will be shared by TCI secretariat team in advance.

TO RECEIVE A FELLOWSHIP THE POTENTIAL FELLOW NEEDS TO DEMONSTRATE:

- ✓ A dully filled application form with clear plan of action which could cover the following and is not limited to,
 - Establishment of new or strengthening of existing national networks for stronger advocacy at national levels (e.g. leading advocacy initiatives on key thematics such as de-institutionalization, community inclusion, access to justice, legal capacity, etc. for inclusion of youth and gender diverse communities of persons with psychosocial disabilities. Brining voices of youth and gender diverse communities in national consultations, disability action plans, cross disability networks, and organizing inclusion campaigns.
 - Establishment of new or strengthening existing support systems or services in the communities in line with the UNCRPD principles (e.g. organizing

independent peer led support groups, crises response services, etc. at national level to support people with psychosocial disabilities for their inclusion in communities)

Ability to support research on DI financing (e.g., tool development, desk review, FGDs/KIIs, ethical data handling, synthesis/analysis and report writing), including basic costing and budget mapping to compare community living models with institutional living systems.

THE CRITERIA FOR THE CANDIDATES ARE:

- ✓ *Should be a person with a lived experience of psychosocial disability, preferably from youth or gender diverse communities*
- ✓ *Based in a low- or middle-income countries from Asia-Pacific, Africa or Latin America*
- ✓ *Have interest in pursuing the advocacy opportunities presented by the CRPD, particularly Article 19*
- ✓ *The fellow should be from TCI full or associate members*
- ✓ *The fellows applying as youth should be of a minimum of 25 years of age and maximum of 35 years*
- ✓ *The fellows applying under research fellowship stream must have a minimum of 3-4 years of active national activism/advocacy experience.*

PROCESS

The potential fellows will require to submit the following documents:

1. A duly filled application form,
2. A filled action plan laying out activities of the year (**Note: Applicants applying as research fellows will develop the action plan in collaboration with TCI secretariat after selection. Applicants applying as outreach and advocacy fellows will have to submit a tentative action plan subject and finalize with TCI secretariat after selection**).
3. Two references (*one from TCI member organization & one from any other stakeholder which can include an employer, or academic*).
4. Applicants applying for research fellowship are requested to share any 2 writing samples from previous works (*e.g., a research note, report section, policy brief, case study etc.*)
5. A covering letter
6. Resume/CV

You will be required to share the application package to the TCI secretariat before the closing dates. A contract will be prepared and signed with the fellows once the TORs and action plans are finalized with the TCI secretariat.

REPORTING DUTY

The fellow should write a monthly report to be submitted before 5th of every month as per reporting templates. The fellow will have to plan works and its execution, in partnership with the TCI secretariat.

Fellowships 2026

The Fellowship applications for 2026 are open till 20th January, 2026 and should start their fellowship period from 01st February, 2026.

Send your applications to secretariat@tci-global.org with subject line Application for TCI fellowship 2026 (Outreach and Advocacy Fellow) or TCI Fellowship 2026 (Research Fellow).